

Township of
ESQUIMALT



**COUNCIL PRIORITIES PLAN
2023-2026**

UPDATED JANUARY 2026



View from Highrock Park



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THE LAND OF SHOALING WATER

- > The area now known as Esquimalt has been inhabited by Coast Salish First Nations for over 4,000 years.
- > Esquimalt (pronounced Ess-KWY-malt) is an anglicized version of the lək'ənən word “es-whoy-malth,” which means the place of gradually shoaling waters.
- > Year of incorporation: September 1, 1912.
- > Esquimalt is home to close to 18,000 residents.
- > Esquimalt boasts a diverse business landscape, from a bustling graving dock and light industrial enterprises to offices to breweries and a variety of local businesses.
- > Esquimalt has over 40 hectares of parkland, many of these parks overlooking waterways along the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Gorge Waterway.

The Township enjoys over 30 parks, beaches and green spaces.





INTRODUCTION

Goal of the report

Mayor and Council develop and identify key projects and initiatives to be undertaken during the term of Council 2023 – 2026. The report is intended to outline the priorities and their progress.

What are council priorities

Council priorities outline areas of focus for the coming term. These priorities can be amended over time as some are completed and other needs arise. Any proposed new projects are evaluated on priority and costs—both financial and in staff time.

These priorities are in addition to existing operational tasks and approved capital projects.

The projects or initiatives in this plan fall outside of staff's day-to-day operational or service level commitments.

Generally, 90 per cent of staff effort is devoted to delivering on service level commitments, which leaves approximately 10 per cent of staff's workplan capacity for projects that are part of the Council Priorities Plan.

Services

The Township is responsible for delivering essential local services such as parks and recreation; sewer services; transportation infrastructure and fire protection. Land use planning, economic development and other policy areas impact how the township grows.

These services are part of staff's core service work and are included in the financial plan. Details about this work is summarized in the annual reports.



COUNCIL PRIORITY PROCESS

Council was sworn in on November 7, 2022 after the October municipal election. In December of that year, they began strategic planning sessions that included identifying areas of focus; drafting mission, vision and values; and assessing organizational strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

After a follow-up session, this draft was taken to the Committee of the Whole for public input in March 2023. After ratification in April and a housing workshop in May, Council finalized the list of priorities and projects.

The Council Priorities Plan represents Council's direction to staff; staff use this guidance to build their workplans and deliver the results that Council is seeking. While Council retains the flexibility to modify or update the Priorities Plan at any time, the aim of a structured framework is to establish a predictable rhythm

for governance review of Council's priorities throughout the year.

These projects may be adjusted to align with financial and departmental planning. Adjustments to the projects will be reflected in periodic updates of this document.

NOTE: Cllr. Darlene Rotchford resigned her position in October 2024 due to her new position as MLA for the Esquimalt-Colwood riding. Cllr Meagan Brame was successful in the April 2025 by-election.



(Top) Councillor Boardman, Councillor Morrison, Councillor Helliwell, & Councillor Cavens

(Bottom) Councillor Brame, Mayor Desjardins & Councillor Armour

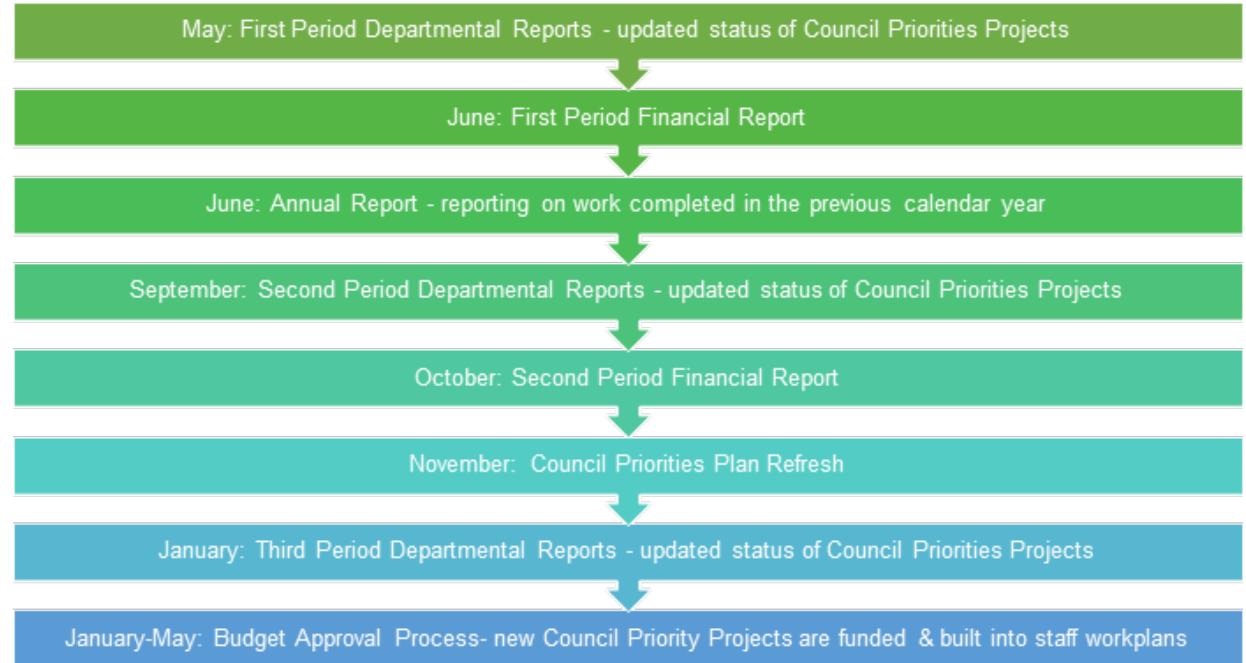
COUNCIL PRIORITY PROCESS

Financial planning

Staff present a draft budget to Council and the public for feedback and adjustments in the spring. This budget outlines both operational needs and capital projects.

Council takes council priorities into account when approving the budget to ensure initiatives are responsibly funded. The resulting Five-Year Financial Plan provides funding for core services as well as the Council Priorities Plan. To keep Council, staff and community expectations aligned, it is important to recognize that Council does not normally add new projects or initiatives to the Council's Priorities Plan without understanding the required funding, staff resources, and impact to current commitments.

The Township has adopted a best practice where new or unfunded projects are referred to the Council Priorities Plan Refresh scheduled to occur each November. Staff would prepare decision notes for Council consideration that would include information about the potential projects (scope, budget, impact assessment, etc.) to enable prioritization of the new projects within existing plans and resources.



How do these priorities impact planning and work throughout the year?

The Chief Administrative Officer and senior leadership group then use these council priorities to develop operational strategies and work plans to support the direction set by Council.

The Period Financial Reports share budget variance updates, including insight on Council Priorities Projects. Progress is reported to Council and the public through Department Reports three times a year and is summarized in the Township's annual report published each June.



VISION, MISSION & VALUES

VISION

The Township of Esquimalt is a leader that is recognized as a vibrant, distinct, resilient and diverse community for people to discover, feel welcome and belong.

MISSION

The Township of Esquimalt works to support economic, cultural, social and environmental health for our current and future generations.

VALUES

Accountability - We are transparent and take responsibility for our policies, our decisions and our actions.

Integrity - We demonstrate high standards of ethical behaviour and open communication that inspires trust.

Respect - We value people and treat everyone with dignity and fairness.

Service Excellence - We meet community needs and achieve high-quality results through responsiveness, creativity, teamwork and partnerships.

Passion - We approach our work with conviction and enthusiasm.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness - We share in the responsibility to create a positive culture, honour differences, and safeguard equity, inclusion and dignity for all.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES



CLIMATE RESILIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



DIVERSIFIED & THRIVING ECONOMY



ENGAGED & HEALTHY COMMUNITY



GOOD GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE



HOUSING



STRONG RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS



Esquimalt Gorge Park



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Tree Protection Bylaw Update	Parks and Recreation		Complete	Q1 2023
Priority Development Workshop—Climate Resilience and Environmental Stewardship	Development Services		Complete	Q2 2023
Climate Action Workshop Initiative: Update Council report templates to include climate action (mitigation and adaptation) considerations	Corporate Services		Complete	Q3 2023
Climate Action Workshop Initiative: Develop an annual progress report that ties to specific strategies within the climate plan	Development Services		Complete	Q2 2024 Q4 2024
Low Carbon Energy Systems Bylaw	Development Services		Complete	Q3 2023
Integrated Resource Management	Engineering and Public Works		Complete. Township is not pursuing IRM at this time; instead supporting a regional approach led by the CRD. Future work by the Township will be considered as a Potential Future Project for consideration by future Councils.	Q2 Q4 2024 Q2 2025 Q3 2025
Green Teams Partnership	Parks and Recreation		Complete	Q3 2023
Develop concrete action plan to reduce corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 including: 1. Electric vehicle fleet plan 2. GHG emission municipal building audit 3. GHG corporate roadmap	Development Services		> The Electric vehicle fleet plan is ongoing. > The municipal building audit was delayed: extended completion date > The GHG Corporate Roadmap will be completed once the municipal building audit has been completed.	Q1 2025 Q1 2026 Q4 2026



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

DIVERSIFIED & THRIVING ECONOMY

Project	Dept	Status	Status Details	Completion
Develop Economic Development Action Plan	HR and Community Relations		Complete	Q3 2023
Options Analysis - Park Place & Esquimalt Road	HR and Community Relations		Project 95% complete – staff to provide update to Council in open session no later than Q3 2026	Q4 2024 Q3 2025 Q2 2025 Q3 2025 Q4 2025
Business Façade Improvement Program	Financial Services and IT		Complete	Q1 2024
Short-term rental policy analysis	Development Services		Consultant has been selected. Work is in progress.	Q2 2026



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

ENGAGED & HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Options Analysis – Arm Street Park Dock	Parks and Recreation		Complete	Q4 2023
Volunteer Recognition Policy	HR and Community Relations		Complete	Q1 2024
Macaulay Elementary Crossing Guard MOU	Financial Services and IT		Complete	Q1 2024
Impact Assessment—Report on Undergrounding of Mainline of Overhead Utilities (Esquimalt Rd (Constance to Dominion)	Engineering and Public Works		Complete	Q1 2024
Family Doctor Shortage & Incentives	Development Services		Complete	Q1 2024
Implement Public Art Plan	Parks and Recreation		Complete	Q2 2024
Public Safety Building—Design Phase	Community Safety Services		Complete	Q2 2024
Police Service Model Transition—Phase I	Community Safety Services		Complete	Q2 2024



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

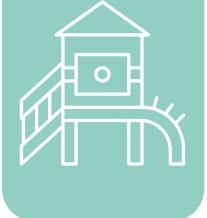
ENGAGED & HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Revise "Maintenance of Property and Nuisance Bylaw" with respect to Construction Noise	Corporate Services		Complete	Q2 2024
Esquimalt Together Against Graffiti	Engineering and Public Works		Initiation complete and operationalized.	Q4 2025
Refresh & Replace Esquimalt Road Banners	HR and Community Relations		Complete and operationalized.	Q1 Q4 2024
Health Needs Assessment	Development Services		Completed in Q4 2025; presented to Council Q1 2026.	Q4 2024 Q1 2025 Q3 Q4 2025
Level of Service Review - Enhance evening and weekend bylaw enforcement	Strategic Initiatives		Council was briefed; after-hours will be trialed and a report to Council in 2026	Q2 Q4 2024 Q1 2025 Q2 2026
Partner and develop turf field for Esquimalt High School	Parks and Recreation		UBCM Strategic Priorities Grant submission complete - waiting on results of grant application. Announcement expected in the spring of 2026	Q2 Q3 2024 Q1 Q4 2025 Q1 2026
Police service model transition—Phase 2	Strategic Initiatives		Progress report to be provided to Council in Q2 2026.	Q2 2026
Public safety building construction	Administration		As of January 2026, project is on track and on budget.	Q3 Q4 2026



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

ENGAGED & HEALTHY COMMUNITY



Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Dock Analysis	Parks and Recreation		Assigned to Parks & Recreation for capital project development.	Q3 Q4 2024 Q1 2025
Implement Active Transportation Network Plan	Engineering and Public Works		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > In December 2025, Council reset the ATNP priorities for pedestrian, cycling, and intersection improvements to guide the upcoming ATNP priority projects. > Esquimalt Road Active Transportation Improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Phase 1: Substantial completion was achieved in Q4 2025, with deficiencies being addressed in Q1 2026. > Phase 2: Detailed design engagement on segments between Joffre and Fraser, and Admirals to Canteen planned for Q1 2026 > Craigflower Crosswalk Improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Substantial completion was achieved in Q4 2025, with deficiencies being addressed in Q1 2026. 	Ongoing
Front Yard Deer Fencing Policy Development	Development Services		Initial report expected to Council in Q1 2026.	Q1 2026



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

HOUSING

Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Construction Protocol Review	Development Services		Complete	Q1 2023
Priority Development Workshop—Housing	Development Services		Complete	Q2 2023
Rent Bank Program Information Brief	Development Services		Complete	Q2 2023
Parking Strategy and Updated Parking Bylaw	Development Services		Complete	Q1 Q4 2024 Q1 2025 Q3 2025
GIS Census Analysis	Development Services		Complete	Q3 2023
Tenant Relocation Policy	Development Services		Complete	Q4 2023
Subdivision & Development Bylaw Update (including sidewalk requirements)	Engineering and Public Works		Complete; Updated Bylaw approved by Council January 15 2024	Q1 2024



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

HOUSING

Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Prepare Zoning Bylaw Amendments to bring the Zoning Bylaw into conformance with recent amendments to the <i>Local Government Act</i>	Development Services		Complete - Bylaw adopted June 2024	Q2 2024
Development Process Improvements	Development Services		Complete	Q2 2024
Affordable Housing Strategy Report	Development Services		Project funded, not yet started	Q2 2027
Development Capacity Assessment	Development Services		Consultant contract awarded; project underway.	Q4 2024 Q3-2025 Q1 Q2 Q3 2026
Doctor Density Bonusing	Development Services		Pending Council discussion of tools	Q4 2024 Q4 2025 Q2 2026
Prepare new Housing Needs Assessment	Development Services		Complete	Q4 2024
Official Community Plan 2025 Updates	Development Services		Complete	Q4 2025
Official Community Plan Major Review	Development Services		Project scope document being developed for Council decision in Q1 2026.	



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

GOOD GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Council Code of Conduct	Corporate Services		Complete	Q2 2023
Sign Bylaw Amendments	Development Services		Complete	Q3 2023
Staff report—B.C. Growing Communities Fund Options Analysis	Development Services		Complete	Q2 2023
Accessibility Plans—Accessibility British Columbia Act Compliance	Corporate Services		Complete December 2, 2024	Q3 Q4 2024
Long Term Financial Planning Update – Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy	Financial Services and IT		Complete	Q4 2023
Asset Management Program—Recreation Inventory and Plan Development	Parks and Recreation		Complete ; Results to be incorporated into the Facilities Master Plan	Q3 2024
Improved budget documentation	Financial Services and IT		Complete	Q2 2025
Asset Management Program—Storm Sewer Master Plan	Engineering and Public Works		Work by a consultant began in Q4 2025, with flow monitoring in place, background information reviewed, and preliminary modeling underway during this quarter. Project status shifted to yellow due to delay in expected project completion date.	Q2 2025 Q1 Q2 2026
Asset Management Program—Facilities Master Plan	Engineering and Public Works		Consultant hired in Q4 2025 to build off the condition assessments that finished in Q3 and to develop an overall asset management plan for all Township facilities. Project status shifted to yellow due to delay in expected project completion date.	Q1 Q2 2025 Q1 Q2 2026



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

GOOD GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Asset Management Program—Sanitary Sewer Master Plan	Engineering and Public Works		Complete; received by Council in February 2025	Q2-Q4 2024 Q1 2025
Recreation Strategic Plan	Parks and Recreation		RFP consultant retained and strategic planning is underway. Final report will be completed in May of 2026. Project status shifted to yellow due to delay in expected project completion date.	Q1 2026 Q2 2026
Pavement Condition Assessment and Management Plan	Engineering and Public Works		Final report from consultant was received by staff in Q4 2025. Staff will be including this information for Council's consideration as part of the 2026 capital planning process in Q1 2026.	Q3 Q1 2026



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS

Project	Department	Status	Status Details	Completion
Gorge Bridge Midden Site Signage	Strategic Initiatives	●	Staff are working with Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation regarding the status of the current signage. This topic is scheduled to be discussed February 9 at the Nations' joint meeting.	Q3 2024 Q3 2025 Q1 2026
Community to Community Engagement (Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation)	Strategic Initiatives	■	Community to Community dinner & flag raising completed November 2024 - ongoing engagement incorporated into operational planning and outcomes.	Ongoing
Develop opportunities for service agreements with Songhees and Esquimalt Nations	Strategic Initiatives	●	Departments working in applicable areas (e.g., archaeological requirements)	Ongoing
Community to Community Engagement (Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation)	Strategic Initiatives	●	Xwsepsum Nation and the Township are working together on the development of a draft MOU for leadership review in Q2 2026. Staff are working to organize a Chief and Council meeting with Songhees Nation for Q2 2026.	Q2 2026



Proposed/Not yet funded



On track



Issues or concerns



Project at risk



Complete

POTENTIAL FUTURE PROJECTS

These projects were considered by Council in 2024 and were deferred for future consideration.

They will be implemented as projects near completion and as staff capacity allows.

Project	Department	Council Priority
Ground-Oriented Small Developments	Development Services	Housing
Parkland Placement, Acquisition and Management	Parks and Recreation	Engaged & Healthy Community

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- > Official Community Plan
- > 2025 Financial Plan Bylaw
- > 2024 Annual Report
- > Period reports
- > Active Transportation Network Plan
- > Climate Action Plan
- > Art in Public Spaces Plan

Find these and other corporate documents on Esquimalt.ca or visit Esquimalt Municipal Hall at 1229 Esquimalt Rd.





STAY IN TOUCH

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